

Message Text

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22

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

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R 190130Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2773

INFO DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, ID, PO, PT, AS

SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE TIMOR (PT); CASUALTY ESTIMATES

REF: (A) JAKARTA 2057 DTG 130909Z FEB 76,

(B) EAST ASIA PACIFIC WIRELESS FILE

NO. 32 OF FEB 17, 1976

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BEGIN SUMMARY: INTERNATIONAL PRESS REPORTS OF 60,000 CASUALTIES IN TIMOR FIGHTING ALMOST UNDOUBTEDLY HIGHLY EXAGGERATED AND PROBABLY BASED ON MISREADING OF JAKARTA INTERVIEW WITH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT (PG) OFFICIAL. END SUMMARY.

1. FEB. 17 WIRELESS FILE (REF B) CARRIES REPORT QUOTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF PT PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT AS STATING 60,000 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED IN PT FIGHTING SINCE OUTBREAK OF WAR IN AUGUST 1975. ORIGIN OF REPORT UNSPECIFIED, BUT WE PRESUME IT BASED ON WIRE SERVICE STORIES (WHICH REPORTEDLY ALSO PICKED UP IN AUSTRALIAN PRESS) OF JAKARTA PRESS INTERVIEWS GIVEN BY PG LEADER LOPES DA CRUZ REPORTED REFTEL A.

2. WE BELIEVE 60,000 CASUALTY FIGURE (WHICH WOULD CONSTITUTE 10 PER CENT TOTAL PT POPULATION) IS HIGHLY EXAGGERATED AND PROBABLY REPRESENTS MISINTERPRETATION OF DA CRUZ STATEMENT (DA CRUZ INTERVIEWS REPORTEDLY CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH, WHICH HE SPEAKS ONLY HALTINGLY, WHICH MAY ALSO BE SOURCE OF DIFFICULTY). RELEVANT SECTION OF REPORT IN LEADING DAILY KOMPAS READS AS FOLLOWS (INFORMAL TRANSLATION): "DA CRUZ SAID SINCE OUTBREAK CIVIL WAR IN PT, IT ESTIMATED THERE HAVE BEEN APPROX. 50-60,000 VICTIMS (OF LOSS OF) LIFE OR PROPERTY, MAJORITY OF WHICH WERE WOMEN AND CHILDREN." QUALIFYING PHRASE CONCERNING PROPERTY LOSS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN USED BY DA CRUZ WITH ALL REPORTERS, BUT ABOVE VERSION CLEARLY SUGGESTS DA CRUZ REFERRING TO TOTAL OF PERSONS WHO HAD SUFFERED DIRECT CONSEQUENCES OF WAR (WHICH WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING CONSIDERING THAT GOI CLAIMED 40,000 PT REFUGEES IN INDONESIAN TERRITORY ALONE).

3. AIDE TO SUHARTO ADVISOR ALI MURTOPO TOLD EMBOFF FEB. 18 GOI BELIEVES 60,000 FIGURE IS GROSS EXAGGERATION, PROBABLY BASED ON MISINTERPRETATION DA CRUZ REMARKS ALONG ABOVE LINES, AND EXPECTS THAT PG WILL SHORTLY ISSUE CLARIFICATION ON THIS POINT. AIDE SAID AVAILABLE CASUALTY INFORMATION IS VERY INCOMPLETE, GOI FORCES HAVE DISCOVERED TWO MASS GRAVES, ONE IN FORMER FRETILIN STRONGHOLD AILEU (200 BODIES, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROBABLY OF UDT CAPTIVES), AND ONE IN BOBONARO, BUT OTHERWISE HAVE DISCOVERED LITTLE EVIDENCE OF WIDESPREAD KILLING. NEWSOM

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